

Ensemble Schumann

Ensemble Bio

"Truly, this is exquisite music, exquisitely played and exquisitely recorded, and it is definitely recommended to all..." -- Fanfare Magazine

A dazzling, colorful trio of soloists, the members of **ENSEMBLE SCHUMANN** – Thomas Gallant, oboe, Steve Larson, viola, and Sally Pinkas, piano, present works by their name-sake Robert Schumann, as well as by Brahms, Saint-Saëns, Loeffler, Poulenc, Shostakovich, and others. Gallant, Larson, and Pinkas have each performed at notable venues, including Lincoln Center, the Frick Collection and Carnegie Hall in New York City, Jordan Hall in Boston, Wigmore Hall in London, the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and the festivals at Tanglewood, Ravinia, Lucerne, Spoleto, and Mostly Mozart. Performing together since 2005, Ensemble Schumann has been featured at the prestigious Da Camera Series in Los Angeles, at the Clark Art Museum in Massachusetts, and on Live From Fraser on WGBH- Radio in Boston.

Recent seasons have included performances for the Stockton Friends of Music in California, Mount Vernon Museum of Art and Principia College in Illinois, Cornell College in Iowa, Auburn Chamber Music Society in Alabama, Washington University Chamber Series in St. Louis, Young Auditorium in Whitewater, Wisconsin, and Strathmore Hall in Maryland, Big Arts on Sanibel Island, The Forum in St. Thomas, and appearances in Iowa, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, and Georgia.

Ensemble Schumann's recordings on the MSR Classics label have received high praise in such publications as Gramophone, Fanfare, and Audiophile Audition.

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Member Bios

Thomas Gallant, oboe

Considered by many to be the most difficult of all the musical instruments, the oboe is often called the "ill wind that no one blows good." Oboist **Thomas Gallant** is one of the world's few virtuoso solo performers on this instrument and he has been praised by The New Yorker magazine as "a player who unites technical mastery with intentness, charm and wit." Gallant is a First Prize Winner of the Concert Artists Guild International New York Competition and one of very few musicians ever to win this competition as an oboe soloist. His solo and chamber music performances have taken him to David Geffen Hall, Weill Recital Hall and the Frick Collection in New York City, to Washington, DC, Los Angeles,

Chicago, Philadelphia, to the Spoleto Festival in Italy, and to the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center. He has appeared as guest soloist with the Kronos Quartet at the Ravinia Festival and has collaborated with flutist Jean-Pierre Rampal, with Cuarteto Casals from Spain, the Colorado, Calder, Tesla and Lark Quartets, Cuarteto Latinoamericano, and with the Adaskin String Trio. Notable performances include a concert of solo and chamber music works for the oboe at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, and tours across the United States as soloist with Camerata Bariloche from Argentina and the String Orchestra of New York City performing concerti by Bach and Vaughan-Williams. Upcoming concerts include tours of China and Europe. Gallant is dedicated to performing neglected and contemporary works for the oboe and has given the New York premieres of works for oboe and strings by Berio, Penderecki, and Holst as well as the Washington, DC premiere of Elliot Carter's Quartet for oboe and strings. He is a member of the trio Ensemble Schumann and Artistic Director of the chamber music group Frisson based in New York City.

Steve Larson, viola

Violist **Steve Larson** is a Senior Artist Teacher at The Hartt School of the University of Hartford, where he has taught since 1998 and has served both as Chair for Strings and Chair of Chamber Music. He is a founding member of the acclaimed oboe, viola, and piano trio, Ensemble Schumann, and the equally renowned Adaskin String Trio. He also performs and records in duo with his wife, violinist Annie Trépanier and throughout the Americas and Europe with their Cuatro Puntos Ensemble which also presents a Connecticut concert series including numerous world premieres and cross-cultural collaborations. Larson is Principal Viola of the Wintergreen Festival Orchestra and Chair of Viola Studies for the intensive string chamber music program at the Wintergreen Summer Music Academy in Virginia. He is a former member of both Avery Ensemble and the Alcan String Quartet, and has performed as a guest with groups such as the Emerson Quartet and the Lions Gate Trio, as well as with orchestras such as the Montreal Symphony and National Arts Center Orchestra. Originally from Regina, Saskatchewan (Canada), Larson holds degrees from McGill University, l'Université de Montréal, and The Hartt School. At the 1997 Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition in the United Kingdom, he won second prize and received the special award for his performance of the commissioned work. He studied violin with Ernest Kassian, Elman Lowe, Howard Leyton-Brown, and Mauricio Fuks, viola with Jutta Puchhammer and Steve Tenenbom, and chamber music with members of the Emerson and Orford String Quartets. He plays an exceptional 17-3/8 inch viola made by Helmuth Keller in 1981.

Sally Pinkas, piano

Since her London debut at Wigmore Hall, Israeli-born pianist **Sally Pinkas** has garnered universal acclaim for her performances as soloist and chamber musician. Among highlights are performances with the Boston Pops, the Aspen Philharmonia, and New York's Jupiter Symphony, and at the festivals of Marlboro, Aspen, Rockport (USA), Pontlevoy (France), Havana (Cuba), and HCMC Conservatory (Vietnam). From a first-ever performance of Beethoven's Emperor Concerto in Bandung, Indonesia, to premieres of George Rochberg's monumental Circles of Fire for two pianos in Russia and Nigeria, and a revival of rarely-heard 19th-century Filipino Salon Music in its birth city Manila, Pinkas commands a wide

repertoire and shares it enthusiastically with young pianists through masterclasses and workshops. Praised for her radiant tone and driving energy, Pinkas's extensive discography includes music by Mozart, Schumann, Fauré, Debussy, Gaubert, Martinů, Shapiro, Pinkham, and Wolff for the MSR, Centaur, Naxos, Toccata Classics, and Mode labels. She tours and records regularly with the Hirsch-Pinkas Duo (a collaboration with her husband pianist Evan Hirsch), with Ensemble Schumann, and with the Adaskin String Trio. Other recent collaborators include the Apple Hill String Quartet, Cuarteto Latinoamericano, and the UK's Villiers Quartet. This season she will be making her solo debut in Spain, returning to Brazil with the Hirsch-Pinkas Duo, and to China on an extensive tour with Ensemble Schumann. Pinkas holds performance degrees from Indiana University and the New England Conservatory of Music, and a Ph.D. in Composition from Brandeis University. Her principal teachers were Russell Sherman, George Sebok, Luise Vosgerchian, and Genia Bar-Niv (piano), Sergiu Natra (composition), and Robert Koff (chamber music). Pianist-in-residence at the Hopkins Center at Dartmouth College, she is Professor of Music at Dartmouth's Music Department.

(Updated September 2020. Please discard previously dated materials and contact Luc Cianfarani at luc@arielartists.com before making any alterations or cuts.)